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"WHAT 100 YEARS OF PEACE AMONG ENGLISH SPEAKING PEOPLE HAS MEANT TO THE WORLD."

PRIZE ESSAY *written under the Auspices of the*
LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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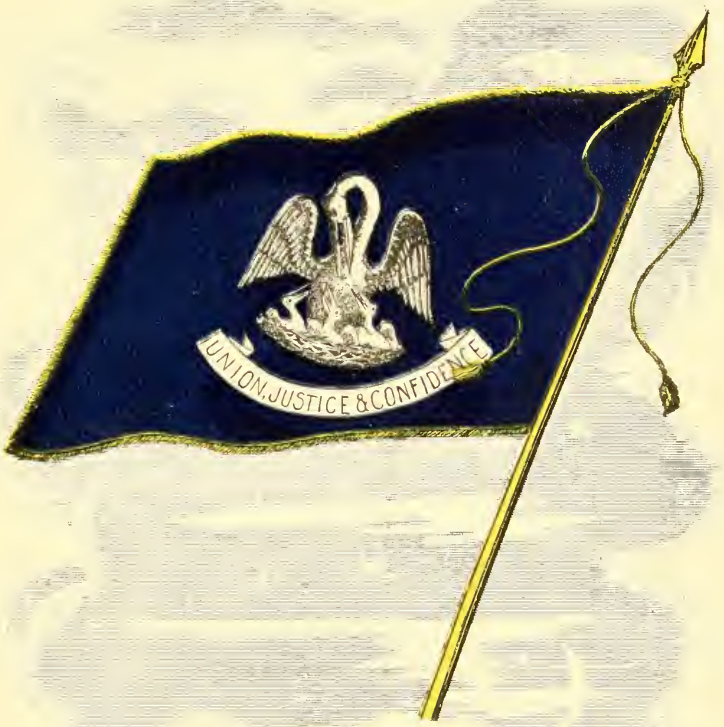

THE FLAG OF LOUISIANA

In use for over 100 years, but not officially adopted until July 1st, 1912.

(See Act 39 of the General Assembly of Louisiana, of 1912, page 47)

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What 100 Years of Peace among English Speaking People has meant to the World.

Just one hundred years ago, in the little town of Ghent, Belgium, was signed a treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. This treaty marked the end of the war of 1812 and the beginning of the era of peace which has extended throughout the century, its splendor never marred by any pretense of war between these two nations, the mightiest of the world.

During this century of peace and tranquility these two mighty streams of life have flowed on side by side, never overflowing their banks, but both bound for a common goal—the vast sea of eternity. They have flowed on, yes blessed by a peace which was bought with many dollars and the blood of many men.

In our every day life we learn the true worth of something when we realize the faults, unworthiness and undesirability of its opposite. Thus we may contrast war and peace, and by showing the disadvantages of the first make clear the advantages of the second.

Many definitions of war have been given, but General Sherman, although speaking in very strong terms, tells the truth when he says "War is hell." Devils do not treat one another as we do in war. War produces one of the worst of emotions—hate; it clogs up the channels of commerce; it is the demon which snatches away the life blood of a nation. The makers of our great and grand American Republic dreaded war and avoided it as the greatest of human evils. They realized that war was not the best means to which they might resort, that war multiplies injuries instead of lessening them.

Would that some Raphael could picture the awfulness of war. A pen picture seems so deficient. However, let us glance at a country engaged in war. Her ground is covered with blood; the harmony of home destroyed; children are fatherless; wives are widows; business is at a standstill; commerce neglected, the merchant's ships lie idle in the harbors; literary pursuits are forgotten. The noise of battle exceeds all other sounds, the minds of men are bent on slaughter as the means of redressing their wrongs. Is this Christian-like? Are we yet in that barbarous stage characterized by the love of conquest?

War and the preparation for it are the greatest burdens of our nations. The war Department in 1913 spent $160,387,453 for the support of the army. The Civil War cost us millions of dollars and rivers of blood. Our war with Spain cost more than one billion of dollars and 20,000 lives. Great Britain and the Transvaal spent the same amount and 91,000 lives before their differences were adjusted.

To what better advantages this money could have been used. This money wrung from the life blood of the countless numbers who suffered and died in war. It could have been used in innumerable ways to develop manufactures, increase commerce, educate the children, for they are the people of the morrow; to found charitable institutions for the poor and needy, or in any way to better humanity.

And the lives which were forfeited, the lives which supplied the crimson blood that appeased the angry God of War, could they not have perhaps uplifted humanity? Perhaps to-day there lies beneath a soldier's grave one who could have been another Titian, a Beethoven, an Edison or a Shakespeare.

It is for the interest of humanity that the occasions of war and the tendency towards it should be lessened. The humanizing influences of commerce and agriculture should attract men's minds and tend to turn them from war. Oh, that "the swords might be turned into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, the nations learn war no more."

The disadvantages of war now should be clear; let us glance at the advantages of peace and what this century of peace has meant to America, Great Britain and the other leading countries.

To America it has meant everything. At the close of the War of 1812 we were indeed a small nation among the nations of the world. We had no manufactures, no commerce, no regular system of free education, no great charitable institutions, no railroads, no literature distinctly our own, and, in fact, we were backward in all respects. Since then, while enjoying the blessings of peace, we have grown to be one of the greatest and grandest nations on the globe. We have developed vast manufactures, producing our own necessary articles, while at the same time supplying other nations with them. We have in America some of the greatest manufacturers of the world and many fortunes have been made in this line. Our commerce is very extensive, our merchant's ships dot the distant seas and we trade with all the nations. Our vast continent is covered with a network of railroads, making communication very easy; we have the telephone and the telegraph, two of the great inventions during this era of peace, which enable us to be in very close communication with distant points. We have one of the greatest systems of free education in the world and perhaps the only one of its kind. We have numbers of Colleges and Universities, where a higher education may be obtained. We have institutions of charity of every description in which the less fortunate of humanity receive care. We have the inventive geniuses of the world. More inventions have been made during this era than perhaps ever before. In literary lines we have the greatest philosophers, poets, and writers of the century. During this time we have also produced some of the most able scientists of the world. And could this have happened during war? No, it is but the result of peace.

What has this century of peace meant to Great Britain? Practically the same that it has meant to the United States. This mighty empire on whose territory the sun never sets, has gained much of her greatness during this century of peace.

What has this peace meant to the other nations—to Japan, China, France, Germany and all the other countries which comprise our international union of to-day? Have they not progressed rapidly under the beneficial influence of peace between the two leading nations of their union. The smaller countries have made rapid strides towards general betterment, having such an example of peace before them.

Under this influence of peace dauntless men and women have pierced the wilds of savage countries, bringing the truth of the gospel and a taste of civilization to our savage brethren.

This peace has fostered international brotherhood; nations who think alike will not dispute. The opening of the various cosmopolitan clubs has done much to foster this feeling of common brotherhood and promote peace. They bring the nation into closer communication, and we all know that it is by communication that we develop.

How are we to preserve this peace of a century so that it may continue throughout the centuries from generation to generation? Only in one way—by arbitration. To argue that arbitration is better than war is as useless as to argue that civilization is better than barbarism. We all are convinced that peaceful settlement of differences is superior to riot and bloodshed.

For the purpose of promoting peace, fostering international brotherhood, and establishing arbitration in place of war, there has been founded at The Hague an International Court of Arbitration. Andrew Carnegie, recognizing the worthiness of such a tribunal, has donated $1,500,000 for the purpose of erecting a permanent home for this court, to be known as The Temple of Peace.

Arbitration has settled several disputes which have remained settled, while great wars have only temporarily settled similar matters. War costs millions of dollars and lives, while arbitration costs comparatively nothing.

In conclusion, let us resolve to celebrate this anniversary of peace in a suitable way. Let us tell our children of it, for they will be the nation of the years to come. Let us scatter broadcast the blessings of peace, and may each heart be lifted up to its benevolent Creator in a prayer of thanksgiving and the request that our grand and glorious country may long enjoy the benign influence of peace.

Peace, the soothing angel, has bent o'er us many years,
Her wings have enshadowed us and driven away our fears;
May the Almighty Father in His wisdom and His love
Grant her presence to us longer from the regions up above.

GOLD PRIZE MEDAL

Awarded by the Society at the final meeting of Judges, May 19th, 1914.

HONORABLE MENTION

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